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## **Panel system likely for next civic polls**

The election pattern for the Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal corporations is likely to change with efforts being made to embrace the panel system, which sets size of each ward as per population and requires each corporator to represent at least 40,000 people.

The state government is said to be keen on pushing this and both corporations are likely to oblige, though corporators are by and large against the move.

If it is done, the 2012 civic polls would be held as per this year's census figures that will be out in 2011 and the PCMC corporators would go up to around 125 from 105 now. The number of PMC corporators would also rise from 144. "I favour the panel system as it helps reduce elected representatives with a criminal background, as they would not be able to exercise their influence on 50,000 voters. Pune Municipal Corporation was one of the first to accept the panel system but dropped it in 2004. There are problems like corporators taking credit for work. Many a time, three people from different parties get elected to the same panel," said BJP corporator in PMC Vikas Matkari.

PCMC Congress corporator Babu Nair said, "A corporator is able to exercise influence over his ward in the present system. The panel

system will result in dilution of powers. Also, it is seen that corporators cannot work together in a panel.”

According to the 2001 census, the population of Pimpri-Chinchwad was 10,06,628. Taking this into consideration, the municipal corporation carved out 105 wards.

This year’s census report would be out after March 2011. PCMC officials estimate that the population of the township would have grown to 15 lakh. The PMC area now has over 35 lakh.

According to the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporation Act, in municipal corporations where population is in over 12 lakh and less than 24 lakh, a minimum of 115 corporators should be elected. Also, in every town where population is over 12 lakh, there can be one elected corporator for every 40,000 people.

The 2002 elections of the PCMC had taken place according to the panel system when the state election commission divided the township into 35 wards. Three candidates were to be elected from each ward. Likewise, the election commission would decide the number of wards for the 2012 polls. There can be a minimum of three and a maximum of five elected representatives in each ward.